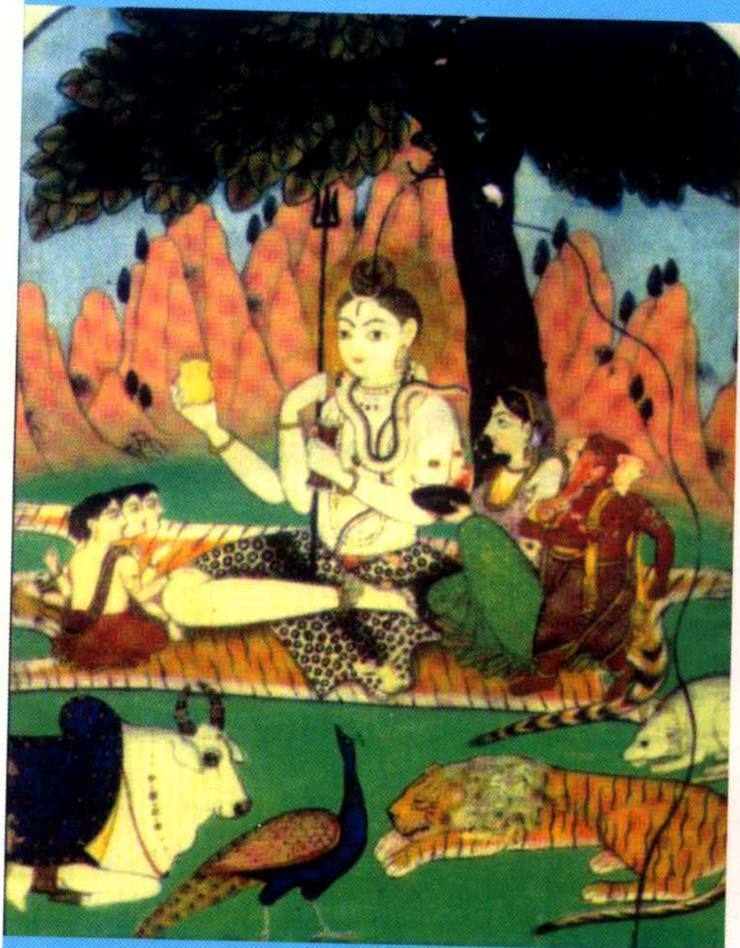
Comparative Religion Series – 7/2011

Kashmir Shaivism

And the Five Basic Human Values



M. K. Kaw

Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values
New Delhi
January 2011

Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values

(A Unit of the Sri Sathya Sai Centre Trust)

The sole objective of Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values is to groom, mould and shape people into persons of character. The Centre provides a specialized training to principals of various school systems from all over India. From January 2004 to November 2009, fifty four Orientation Programmes have been conducted and the total number of principals trained is 1251.

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A National Convention on Promotion of Value Education was organized by the Centre on 12 – 13 December, 2009, at its Auditorium.

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The Centre publishes a bi- monthly magazine 'Sai International', which highlights various facets of human values and their relevance to modern society. The Centre produces other print materials on themes and issues related to its mission.

The website www.sai-international.org.in is fast becoming popular among internet users and it propagates the teachings of Baba to the whole world. The Centre has recently started an Online Certificate Programme on "Education in Human Values".

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"God does not want meditations and austerities
Through love alone canst thou reach the Abode of Bliss.
Thou mayst be lost like salt in water
Still it is difficult for thee to know God."

-- Lalleshwari

"The grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of Yoga or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it; love that needs no requital; love that knows no bargaining; love that is paid gladly as a tribute to the All loving; and love that is unwavering."

-- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



Preface

The difficulty about all writing on spiritual topics is that it is difficult to understand. Scholars are so full of knowledge that it would be unfair to expect that they will not exhibit it. And if they know Sanskrit, the text is bound to be full of esoteric shlokas and phrases, for each of which you need a commentary.

Kashmir Shaivism is no exception. That is why there is a need to explain its tenets in layman's language, so that we can all grasp the essentials of this philosophy.

What is the nature of the divine? Kashmir Shaivism tells us that God exists and only He exists. He is the supreme consciousness. He is the light by which all other lights can be seen. He is both inactive consciousness and active energy. God is a single entity with both qualities in Him. He is the doer and He is the witness.

What is the nature of the universe? Kashmir Shaivism teaches us that the entire universe is a reflection of God. There is no creation and no destruction. The universe has manifested in a sort of play. It is not an illusion. It is as real as God, as it is a reflection of God. It is a form assumed by God, who is essentially formless.

What is the nature of man? Kashmir Shaivism expresses the view that Man is a form assumed temporarily by God. Man is as real as God. In fact, he is God in disguise. Human life is a kind of divine play.

Unfortunately, we do not realize our real nature and tend to identify ourselves with our bodies. Bodies are temporary. When we identify ourselves with the bodies, we think we are ill, we are aging and we die. This generates unhappiness. We feel our lives are meaningless. We do not see why we are here, what we are doing, what is the purpose of life.

Kashmir Shaivism tells us that spirituality is just the attempt to understand our real nature. Once we understand that we are God, everything else falls into place. God is immortal. God does not fall sick. God does not age. When we identify ourselves with God, all



tension leaves us. We are not afraid of illness, old age or death. We understand that in our cosmic form we are the entire universe.

We realize that the whole of life is a kind of divine play. We try to grasp the rules by which the play is regulated and try to follow the same. We understand that the world is a stage on which a divine drama is being played. We are among the actors. We have a certain role to perform. The script has been written. There is a director who is guiding the whole show. As an actor, we have to act well our part; there all the honour lies. If God is directing the show, and you have a role to perform, you have no option. You cannot refuse to act in the drama.

Indians have realized that life is real and life is earnest, and that is what is driving India towards becoming a Superpower.

Today, Kashmir Shaivism is helping to create a global civilization. If we are God, all men and women of the world are essentially brothers and sisters. The UNESCO's campaign to relearn the art of living together is directly based on the main tenets of Kashmir Shaivism.

(M.K.Kaw)
Dean

New Delhi
January, 2011



Inside





CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Kashmir Shaivism is the name given by the renowned oriental scholar J.C.Chatterjee to what was traditionally known as Pratibhijnya Darshan or the Trika philosophy. He gave this popular name as the philosophy revolves around Param Siva and originated in Kashmir. The name has stuck and is now known the world over.

Kashmir Shaivism is the most prominent system in the Tantric tradition.Tantra shows us how to accept and use the world and worldly values so that they become a means of Self-realization.It presents an integral view of life that synthesizes enjoyment (bhoga) and liberation (moksha), as well as worldly involvement (pravritti) and renunciation (nivritti).

To describe the philosophy in simple terms, it says that Param Siva or Cosmic Consciousness is the sole reality of the universe. There is a movement which results in the process of involution, as a consequence of which the manifested universe with its 36 elements comes into being. Then there is a reverse process of evolution, whereby the individual soul discovers that he is verily Param Siva. This momentous discovery and the consequent recognition of one's true self is what constitutes liberation.

You are already divine. All that you have to do is to discover this fact about yourself. Nothing else needs to be done.

This philosophy is said to have been revealed by Lord Siva himself. Long ago he came as Swachchandanath. He disclosed 10 Siva Tantras, which preached dualism, 18 Rudra Tantras which talked of monistic dualism and 64 Bhairav Tantras which advocated pure monism. Thus in all we have 92 Tantras. These three kinds of Tantra, when taken together, are known as the Trika scriptures. However, it is the monistic Bhairav Tantras which constitute Kashmir Shaivism.



Under the influence of Kaliyuga, the original Shaiva philosophy was lost to the world. Siva again appeared on Mount Kailasha and ordered sage Durvasa to spread this knowledge to mankind. Durvasa created mental progeny (manas putras) to enunciate the philosophy once more.

Apart from this apocryphal story, it is Vasugupta and Somananda who are believed to be founders of Kashmir Shaivism. Vasugupta wrote Spandamrita and Vasavitika. Somananda wrote Shiva Drishti.Others who followed included Kallata, Utpalacharya and Abhinavagupta.The important works of Abhinavagupta include Pratyabhijnya Vimarshini, Tantraloka, Tantrasara and Parmarthsara.

Atrigupta, great scholar of Shaivism, lived in Antarvedi in what is now Madhya Pradesh. On one of his tours to that area, King Lalitaditya discovered this great Shaiva teacher. He persuaded him to accompany him to Kashmir. In this very family Abhinavagupta was born after a few centuries.

Swami Lakshmanjoo traced his lineage in the guru-shishya parampara of Abhinavagupta. It is Swami Lakshmanjoo who has primarily been responsible for revival of interest in the scholarly tradition of Kashmir Shaivism in the present era. The second stream of Shaivism, which may be called the shaktipat tradition, has emerged under the inspiration of Baba Muktananda.

The special significance of Abhinavagupta

The philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism occupies a very distinguished position among the various schools of religious and spiritual thought in this country. The modern reappraisal of this philosophy recognizes Abhinavagupta as one of the all time greats in the history of the world.

Abhinavagupta provides the thread of unity among the different schools of the Kashmir Shaiva tradition, weaving them into the unified Pratyabhijnya philosophy.

At the time of Abhinava, Kashmir Shaivism had four main sub-traditions— the Spanda, Krama, Kula and Pratyabhijnya schools.



The Spanda School emphasized the dynamic aspect of Consciousness, technically called *spanda* or *kriya*. It advocated catching the thread of spontaneous activity as the means of realizing the Self.

Abhinavagupta pointed out that Spanda or Shakti is another name for the natural dynamism of Shiva or Consciousness, which is at once both Shiva and Shakti. Thus Pratyabhijnya which is the knowledge of the Self or Shiva cannot be separated from Spanda.

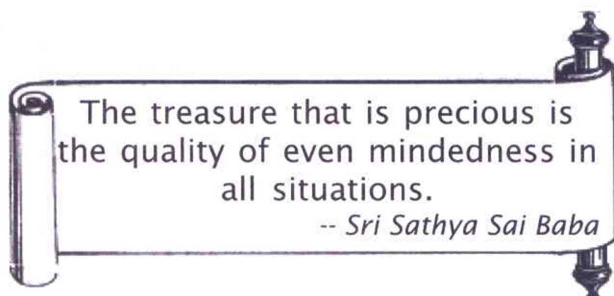
The Krama School, which emphasized the successive steps of manifestation of the Self or Shiva in the form of the world of creational forms (*vikalpas*), tended to make use of the creational forms to reach the Self in a successive way.

Abhinava showed that Krama was also included in the Pratyabhijnya, for the creational forms are the manifestation of the Self or Shiva, and Shiva can be reached through these successive steps too. It is just a question of different means (*upayas*). Krama would come naturally under what is called Saktopaya.

The Kula School, which emphasized the unity of Shiva and Shakti symbolically expressed in the union of man and woman, aimed at self-realization through the left-handed path, using the five M's, especially the fifth 'M' of Maithun (sexual union).

Abhinava showed that the Kula is meant to sublimate the aspirant's sexual energy into pure conjugal love, which in turn releases the imprisoned flow of universal love. Universal love is the correlate of Self-realization or Pratyabhijnya.

Thus Abhinavagupta was able to weave the four separate strands of Kashmir Shaivism into a coherent system of philosophy.





CHAPTER 2

Let us start with a story

In order to give the essence of Kashmir Shaivism, it would be best to start with a story. Sri Ramakrishna used to narrate the following tale of a tiger cub, which illustrates the basic theme of this philosophical system very well.

> *Nangta told the story of the tigress and the herd of goats. Once a tigress attacked a herd of goats. A hunter saw her from a distance and killed her. The tigress was pregnant and gave birth to a cub as she expired.*
>
> *The cub began to grow in the company of the goats. At first it was nursed by the goats and later on, as it grew bigger, it began to eat grass and bleat like the goats. Gradually the cub became a big tiger; but it still ate grass and bleated. When attacked by other animals, it would run away like the goats.*
>
> *One day a fierce looking tiger attacked the herd. It was amazed to see a tiger in the herd eating grass and running away with the goats at its approach. It left the goats and caught hold of the grass-eating tiger, which began to bleat and tried to run away.*
>
> *But the fierce tiger dragged it to the water and said, "Now look at your face in the water. You see you have the pot-face of a tiger; it is exactly like mine." Next it pressed a piece of meat into its mouth. At first, the grass-eating tiger refused to eat the meat. Then it got the taste of the meat and relished it.*
>
> *At last the fierce tiger said to the grass-eater: "What a disgrace! You lived with the goats and ate grass like them!" And the other was really ashamed of itself.*

Sri Ramakrishna explained this story as under:

Eating grass is like enjoying woman and gold. To bleat and run away like a goat is to behave like an ordinary man. Going away



with the new tiger is like taking shelter with the guru, who awakens one's spiritual consciousness and recognizing him alone as one's relative. To see one's face rightly is to know one's real Self.

This is the gist of the Pratibhijnya school of Kashmir Shaivism. A human being is already divine, just as the tiger is already a tiger. You are already Shiva. The only problem is that you have forgotten it. The fierce tiger is the guru. He reminds you and enables you to recognize your self

The guru helps you to re-cognize your Self. Just as the fierce tiger reminded the grass-eating tiger that it was indeed a tiger. The moment you recognize your Self, you are Shiva. That is it!

Swami Lakshman Jee explained the same idea with an example thus:

> "For example, let us take the case of a bride and a bridegroom. The woman has not seen her husband-to-be and craves to see him. Concerning him she has only heard praise and glory, but she has not actually met him.
>
> Suppose this girl and her future husband by chance happen to go separately on the same pilgrimage. When they arrive at the place of pilgrimage they meet. The girl, however, does not feel anything for the man because she does not know him to be her future husband. Yet her future husband and this man are the same person.
>
> When a friend introduces her to him telling her that this is the man who is to be her future husband, she is filled with pleasure, happiness and ecstasy. She realizes that this is the same man whom she had seen before.
>
> Similarly, in the Pratyabhijnya system, your master tells you that you are the same person for whom you are longing. He teaches you to reach the goal then and there. You realize that there is nowhere to go to and nothing to be done. You are already divine. Now you become aware of this fundamental fact about yourself."

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CHAPTER 3

The Nature of Cosmic Consciousness

The Cosmic Consciousness is the total reality. It is unlimited and universal. For the individual consciousness of a human being, which is limited, it is impossible to even conceive of, let alone grasp, analyze or understand reality. As such Cosmic Consciousness is unknowable. Words cannot define, express or define Cosmic Consciousness. It can only be experienced through direct realization.

Parama Siva or Cosmic Consciousness is eternal, infinite, all-pervading, all knowing and all powerful. He is ineffable, and beyond all description. He is Bliss itself and complete.

Parama Siva holds the manifestation of the universe in Himself as an idea, which ultimately leads to everything expressible in thought and speech.

Consciousness is the supreme light by which everything else shines; it holds everything within itself.

The ultimate reality is designated as the Supreme reality, because there is nothing higher than or beyond it. It is ineffable. It cannot be described as this or that, or not this or not that. So it is called Anuttara.

It is pure, unadulterated consciousness. So it is called Chit.

It is self-consciousness. So it is referred to as Chaitanya.

It is the integral or supreme experience. So it is designated as Purna or Para Samvid.

He is the benign one or Siva.

He is the highest good and bliss. So Parama Siva.

He is the supreme lord. So He is called Parameswara.

He is the Self of everything. So He is called Atman.

He is formless. Yet all forms are His. He is free from all limitations of space and time.

The Self is Consciousness. Reality is Consciousness. Everything is Consciousness.



CHAPTER 4

Involution and the 36 elements

The reality is that only the Cosmic Consciousness exists. The objective world does not have a separate existence. It is no more than the expansion of Primordial Energy, which is inseparable from Cosmic Consciousness. This energy is not separate from Consciousness. The relationship between Cosmic Consciousness and the Primordial Energy is like that between fire and heat.

This universe or objective reality is not unreal or a result of maya or illusion. As it is an aspect of Cosmic Consciousness, it is as real as that. It is not at all unreal or an illusion.

When Shiva is all alone, he exists in the full splendour of God Consciousness. In order to derive bliss, Shiva engages in a play. He withdraws his God Consciousness. Thus he seemingly departs from his own nature and loses himself in his creation. This process is known as *nimesha* or closing. It can also be called as Involution. Shiva has the power to lose himself in his creation by using his Energy of Independence (*Swatantriya Shakti*).

This gives Shiva the chance to expand his God Consciousness through *Unmesha* (opening) or Evolution. When he rediscovers his own nature he finds that he had never lost his own nature. It was always there .The joy of recognizing his own nature gives him great bliss.

Thus the universe is the great play of Shiva in which he is continuously creating this universe, to first lose himself and then find himself. This is the eternal dance of Shiva.

Why?

There are many possible answers to the question as to why Shiva undergoes contraction and creates the universe.

One is that He made a terrible mistake. He created the world. Then He got the idea, "I will create bondage. I will forget who I



am."He forgot who He was and thus we had the phenomenon of Shiva with amnesia.

You could say that given infinite time and space, infinite consciousness would explore every possibility.

It has also been said by Shaivite masters that Shiva, out of the abundance of joy, overflowed and poured forth his love in creation.

Just as in the creation of an individual, so in the creation of the universe, abundance, climax and depletion is the rhythm. But Shaivism says that depletion is temporary and illusory. Shiva is always present.

This question of why God created the world has been tackled in different ways. For example, the Vedas have guessed that Brahman got bored and said to himself, *"Ekoham bahusyam"*. (I am one, let me be many)

When Sai Baba claimed divinity for himself, a devotee asked him as to why he had created the universe. His answer: "I separated myself from myself so that I could love myself."

In a poem published in my book "Look Closely At", I have compared this query to the futility of a leaf in a hedge.

Are leaves bunched in hedges miserable
For not perceiving the reason why
They are planted or trimmed?
May be we are leaves in the hedge in God's garden.

The theory of reflection

Parama Shiva creates the universe as an *abhasa* projected or reflected in the mirror of cosmic consciousness. Consciousness is the *bimba* that is reflected and Consciousness is also the mirror in which the world is reflected. Consciousness is a creative mirror that projects reflections from within itself. Consciousness is fully aware of the process of reflection going on within it.

Another analogy is that of the dream. Consciousness projects out of itself a whole world in a dream. This dream world is nothing but consciousness itself. The world is the cosmic dream of Shiva consciousness.The dream is taken as an ideal reality, not as an illusion.



Since the world is the projection of one and the same Shiva-mind, all individuals souls see the same world The world of appearance persists even after the disappearance of the individual minds, because it is the creation of the cosmic mind.

Creation is the sportive activity (*krida* or *Lila*) of Shiva, the blissful dance of Nataraja, and is meant to be taken by the individual soul in the same spirit.Tantric sadhana aims at making whole of life as a playful activity, which is meant to be enjoyed.

The Three Malas

The explanation for contraction is through three malas, contractions or impurities that afflict all of us. Mala is dust, dirt, impurity, taint and dross. It is what covers and limits the pure gold of divine consciousness. It refers to those limiting conditions, both personal and impersonal, which hamper the free expression of the spirit.

The malas are a contraction of will, knowledge and action. Impure will or anava mala involves desire. We need more things to make us whole. Contraction of knowledge takes place because of mayiya mala. We are confused about the meaning and direction of our lives. Contraction of action takes place due to karma mala, the limited nature of our actions, good or bad. We can do some things, but not everything.

Involution

Shaivism meticulously describes the process whereby the one undivided Cosmic Consciousness becomes the universe. This process has 36 stages or tattvas, each one a little denser than the one before. In the beginning the tattvas have the highest, purest vibration. Gradually, the light darkens, things become dull, ignorant and heavy till we reach the grossest element of Earth.

It could be said that the tattvas occur within man. The higher states of consciousness are actually found within, in deep states of contemplation, beyond the mind. As consciousness moves from the inner to the outer, we come down the tattvas.

Tattvas 1 to 5

Tattvas 1 to 5 represent the divine realm of pure consciousness



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Tattva 1 Shiva is transcendent consciousness. He is the Brahman, pure light.

Tattva 2 is Shakti, pure light becoming active, creative and self-reflective. Shiva and Shakti are like God and his power, the light and self-awareness, yin and yang, male and female. With Shakti, the universe teems with creativity and abundance. Shakti is the dynamism of God.

Tattva 3 is Shiva as perfect will and feeling. Perfect will implies perfect intentionality, perfect contentment and bliss. It is perfect love, peace and freedom.

Tattva 4 is Shiva as perfect wisdom and light. God has perfect knowledge. He knows everything, since the world exists only in His knowledge. He knows the past, the future. He understands how everything works. He has perfect mastery of language. He can express and create.

Tattva 5 is Shiva as omnipotent activity. He has perfect power of action. Whatever He wants to do, He can do. He creates light. He creates the entire universe. He has complete freedom of action.

Tattva Six: Maya

In the sixth tattva maya, we encounter contraction. The principle of limitation takes the stage, changing everything. Maya is a black hole from which Shiva emerges in a new form at tattva 12. Consciousness, which is perfectly powerful, loses touch with its power and becomes us.

The essence of our predicament is externalization. We are bewitched by the outer world. We worry about how other people perceive us. When we seek fulfillment through others, this disempowers us and creates bondage.

Maya creates the bondage through the five kanchukas or limitations

Tattvas 7 to 11

Tattvas 7 to 11 are the kanchukas, which are aspects of the reducing function of maya.



Tattva 7 is kala. As against Shiva's omnipotence, we have limited ability to do things. This is a limitation of kriya shakti.

Tattva 8 is Vidya. As against Shiva's omniscience, this gives us limited knowledge. This is a limitation of jnana shakti.

Tattva 9 is Raga. Against Shiva's completeness, it gives us desire, which is an index of lack of completeness. This is a limitation of ichcha shakti.

Tattva 10 is Kala. Against the infinite nature of Shiva, we have the limitation of time. This is a limitation of Chit Shakti. Chit is pure, expanded consciousness without thought forms and time begins with thought forms.

Tattva 11 is Niyati. Against the omnipresence of Shiva, we have the limitations of space and causation. This is a limitation of ananda shakti. Ananda or bliss is the same as swatantriya or freedom and this is diminished by being closeted in a particular space.

Tattvas 6 to 11 keep us hanging in the middle like Trishanku, so as to prevent our ascending into the sky of Consciousness.

Tattva 12 and 13

Shiva who begins as the impersonal divinity now becomes a human individual Purusha or Jiva at tattva 12. Shakti, the primordial power of divinity, now becomes Prakriti at tattva 13.

Purusha is no one but Shiva. Maya and the kanchukas have done their work on him. He is limited, insecure and confused. So Purusha and Prakriti are Shiva Shakti in a diminished form. Purusha is aloof like Shiva, while Shakti gives rise to everything.

Let us suppose that Shiva first conceives of a universe within himself. He may then intuit another way to experience his creation. The idea of separation may dawn on Him. Now He sees the universe outside himself and imputes to it a separate and independent existence.

Shiva's creation is held in common by all individuals and never creates a problem. It is the purusha's creation that is the inner world which creates bondage. It is the purusha who experiences attachment and aversion and thus creates a flood of inner thoughts and feelings.



Shiva therefore loses His bliss and becomes unhappy. He also loses his omniscience and omnipotence. He loses his ability to do things.

Tattvas 14 to 36

The lower tattvas 14 to 36 account for the mind, senses, body and the physical world.

Tattvas 14, 15 and 16 are the three components of the mind: the intellect, the ego and the lower mind

Tattvas 17 to 21 are the jnanendriyas, the powers of perception, the senses which allow the Self to gain knowledge of the outer world. These are the powers of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

Tattvas 22 to 26 are the karmendriyas, the powers of action: the powers of speaking, grasping, locomotion, excretion and procreation.

Tattvas 27 to 31are the tanmatras, the subtle elements; sound in itself, touch in itself, form in itself, taste in itself and smell in itself.

Tattvas 32 to 36 are the gross elements; ether, air, fire, water and earth. These constitute the material reality.

The process of contraction or involution prima facie appears to be linear, starting with Param Shiva and ending with earth. It is actually concentric with upper tattvas always hidden within successively lower tattvas.Thus a stone may appear to be the most dense, inert and stupid thing in the universe. Yet even then, Consciousness and the higher tattvas are all present in the stone. All 36 tattvas are present in the stone.

The universe comes from the inside out rather than from top down. The universe is the opening out of Shiva, which is the opening out of each one of us.

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CHAPTER 5

The Theory of the Alphabet

Now the interesting part is that the process of creation has an exact correlate with the letters of the Devanagari alphabet. It is somewhat like the statement in the Bible, "In the beginning, there was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God." In other words, God used language to create the universe.

In Kashmir Shaivism, Shakti is called vimarsha (thinking or ideation). Idealism is the prominent tone of the Tantras, as Consciousness is the only Reality. Matter does not exist; what is known as matter is actually a projection of consciousness. As such, all activity is activity in Consciousness. Activity in consciousness means thinking or ideation.

As all thinkng is carried out in language, Shabda is the very life of vimarsha.Since the world is a manifestation of Shakti, and since Shakti is understood as vak(speech or word), it is understandable that the world is a manifestation of vak.

Kashmiri Shaivism has Matrikachakra, the theory of the alphabet. The universe is created by God as one with His own nature. The reflection of the universe is like the reflection which takes place in a cup-shaped mirror.

The sixteen vowels represent the Shiva tattva and the thirty five consonants represent the Shakti tattva.

The first vowel "अ" (a) represents the energy of consciousness. It stands for *anuttara*.

The second vowel "आ" (aa) represents *ananda* Shakti or the energy of bliss. Consciousness and bliss are inseparable. So far the universe has not taken shape. It is residing in the energy of bliss.

The third vowel is "इ" (i), which represents the unagitated *icchha* Shakti or the energy of will. It is residing peacefully in its own nature.



Next the agitated formation of the energy of will takes place. This is represented by the letter "ई" (ee). Shiva's will is agitated but not in such a way as to be separated from His own nature.

At this stage, there is an apprehension in the mind of Shiva that if He goes ahead with the process of creation, He will lose Himself.

The next vowel is "उ" (u) which stands for *unmesha*. It indicates that universal existence is about to begin.

The next letter is "ऊ" (oo) which stands for *unata* or lessening. The apprehension keeps Shiva at a standstill and prevents Him from moving forward.

Shiva separates Himself from the universe and resides in His own nature of consciousness and bliss. This state is denoted by the vowels "ऋ, ॠ, ऌ, ॡ" (ri, ri, li, li).

However, the energies of consciousness and bliss do not recognize the apprehension, which is mainly the product of His agitated will. These two begin afresh to create the universe.

The combination of the bliss and consciousness energies with the energies of will and knowledge gives rise to the vowels, "ए (e), ऐ (ai), ओ (o), and औ (au)".

The letter "ए" stands for the not so vivid energy of action.

The letter "ऐ" stands for vivid energy of action.

The letter "ओ" stands for more vivid energy of action.

The letter "औ" denotes the most vivid energy of action.

At this stage the universe stands created. Yet Shiva finds that the totality of his Self, which is full of consciousness and bliss has not been lessened at all. Nothing has happened. He is residing in His own point.

This is represented by the letter "अं" (m) (*anusvara*).

The reflection of the universe in the form of a cup-shaped mirror is represented by the sixteenth vowel "अः" (h)(*visarga*).



This letter is denoted by the two points of the colon: The two points are known as the *shiva bindu* and the *shakti bindu*.

The thirty five consonants stand for the reflected universe. These are created by the five energies of consciousness, bliss, will, knowledge and action.

The *mahabhutas* are represented by the letters क (ka), ख (kha), ग (ga), घ (gha) and ङ (na). The *tanmatras* are denoted by the letters च (cha), छ (chha), ज (ja), झ (jha) and ञ (nya). The *karmendriyas* are represented y the letters ट (ta), ठ (thha), ड (da), ढ (dha) and ण (na). The *gyanendriyas* are represented by the letters "त" (ta), "थ" (tha), "द" (da), "ध" (dha) and "न" (na).

The five elements *manas, budhi, ahankara, prakriti* and *purusha* are produced by the letters प (pa), फ (pha), ब (ba), भ (bha) and म (ma).

If we combine the first and last letters we have in the way of Shiva the first letter "अ" and the last letter "ह". Combined with the letter "म" at the end, we get the mantra "अहम्" *(aham)* of Lord Shiva.

When we combine the first and last letters in the way of Shakti, it gives the mantra "क्ष" *(ksh)* which is the mantra of Shakti.

The A of AUM is the Vishwa; the U is Tejas; and the M is Prajna - There is another interpretation in the scriptures. Vishwa is the Waking; Tejas is the Dream; Prajna, the Deep Sleep stage. The Pranava Sadhana (the spiritual exercise of meditation on OM) is therefore very important for Seekers. The Vedas prescribe the repetition of the Pranava, while studying holy texts reciting the Name of the Divine, carrying out daily duties and offering gifts.

-- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



CHAPTER 6

Evolution

Once we see the manner in which contraction or involution takes place, Shaivism explains the reverse journey of evolution or expansion by which the individual soul returns to his Shiva Nature. Just as the *malas* explain the phase of contraction, the *upayas* explain the process of evolution

Karma mala and Anavopaya

Karma mala relates to the physical body. We can do the few things that our organs of action, our hands and feet, can do. We are under the tyranny of gravity, time and decay. As we have to live with the fruit of our actions, we suffer the bondage of karma.

Too much good or bad karma creates attachment to the external world. When our good and bad karmas are balanced, we can receive *shaktipat*, or divine awakening.

Anavopaya is the corresponding yoga or upaya. It involves the cultivation of right actions at the level of the body. It includes karma yoga, which is the yoga of service, ritual worship, hatha yoga and pranayama.It also includes meditation on the chakras, on the breath or on objects in the world.

Mayiya Mala and Shaktopaya

Mayiya mala is due to the mind, which is the organ of duality and separates the subject from the object. The thinking mind gives us limited knowledge as it perceives separation and differences, where there was unity. Aspirants at this level are held in bondage by wrong understanding and misidentification. They think they are the mind or body and not the self.

Shaktopaya works with the contents of the mind. The objective is to get rid of negative thoughts and bring in appropriate, true, positive thoughts. By expanding our philosophical awareness, we try to purify our thoughts.



The method is contemplation, constant contemplation, done with imaginative fervour. A spiritual attitude that transforms the aspirant's understanding of who he is is cultivated. A pure thought becomes the focus of his interior life. One pure thought engenders another pure thought and then another and another.

The mind having pure thoughts becomes strong. It is as if the tears in the fabric have been repaired and now prevent the entrance of unwanted negative thoughts. As a result of the purification process, Consciousness attains the stainless state of thought. This may result in the thought-free state or a mind so free from ego and negative emotion that it reflects the purity of the self.

Contemplation and self-inquiry would be buttressed by mantra repetition, affirmations, prayer, anything in the realm of language, that makes the mind more intelligent, accurate and God-oriented.

If a thought like 'I am present everywhere, everything is in me' is adopted, it can lead an aspirant to the thought-free state

Anava mala and shambhavopaya

Anava Mala is the primal limiting conditioning which reduces the universal Consciousness to an *anu*, a small, limited entity. Shiva loses the memory of who He is. He thinks, 'I am small, I am weak, I am separate.' This gives a sense of being a person, an individual and a sense of imperfection due to contraction of will and swatantriya. Due to the feeling of imperfection, desire arises because there is emptiness and a need to fill it.

Shambhavopaya focuses on the meditator's own essential nature as Shiva, who is the supreme lord. He is the witness of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. He is the underlying awareness, like the empty screen of a television set.

Focussing on the space beyond thought takes him to what Krishnamurti called 'choiceless awareness'. He need not eliminate thought. He simply does not pay attention to the content of thought. He keeps his focus on the space beyond thought, the space that contains thought.

Then he stands in the Self; goes beyond definitions and descriptions, into what is indefinable and indescribable.

He becomes Shiva once again.



Anupaya

Anupaya is the methodless method. It is a felt state of being, where there is no distinction between mind and matter, individual and God. There is an awareness of unity, ease and supernal joy.

This is a state of sahaj samadhi or natural enlightenment. It is not achieved through meditation, recitation or any other kind of self-effort. It is an act of grace, granted by the guru. It leads to 'recognition' and is based on a penetrating insight into the deepest truth.

Anupaya is a profoundly balanced and integrated state. The yogi becomes like Shiva. All his actions are worship of God. All his words are like mantras. He is a source of wisdom for others.

Highest first

Trika discusses the Upayas in the reverse order. The highest means is given first. This is the compassion of Shaivism. Since everyone is divine in his inner nature, no one is too dull to hear the highest truth first.

An overall view of the upayas

The upayas serve as a general model for the understanding and classification of all the means of self-realization.

All the physical means involving external activity and objects come under *anavopaya*. All the mental ways, involving thinking, ideation, meditation and so on come under *saktopaya*. All the spiritual upayas of directly dissolving the ego and entering into the Self are classified under *Sambhavopaya*.

Considered from the point of view of doing and being, anavopaya and saktopaya are in the state of doing. Sambhavopaya is the state of being.

In anavopaya the mind attains rest or becomes peaceful. In sambhavopaya, the mind is dissolved.

Malas and Granthis

The malas can be experienced as contracted feeling and tension in navel (karma mala), third eye (mayiya mala) and the heart (anava



mala). A yogi can find out about the status of his malas and then take remedial action by approaching his tension directly through enquiry and with sufficient skill and insight unblock himself

One can get in touch with the contracted feeling and ask it what it wants to say. One can get the feeling expressed as an accurate statement. The method is to first make these conscious and then let them go.

Our main problem is that what we perceive is distorted by feelings of like and dislike. If we make our thinking orderly and free from emotional overtones, we will see things and people as they are, with clarity and charity.

Applying upayas to malas

We can find great expressions of truth in the shape of aphorisms. We should find out an aphorism that is directly relevant to the mala or contraction we seem to be suffering from. These can be said to ourselves inside our inner space. Some will provide an insight or shift of feeling. Some will point out a weakness and some will have a healing effect.

A summary of malas and upayas

Karma mala says,'I am the body'. This is counteracted by anavopaya, which says,'I am free'. Anavopaya is the sadhana of the body.

Mayiya mala says, 'I am the mind.' This is countered by Shaktopaya, which says, 'I am Shakti.' Shaktopaya is the sadhana of the mind.

Anavo mala says, 'I am a person, a jiva.' This is countered by shambhavopaya, which says,' I am Shiva.' Shambhavopaya is the sadhana of the Self.





CHAPTER 7

Bondage and Liberation

Bondage

Bondage is ignorance of one's real nature. It is not absence of knowledge, but rather incomplete or imperfect knowledge. Ignorance can change the personality. When a king dreams that he is a beggar, no real physical change has occurred, but the king suffers so long as he is in the dream state.

We are a bound soul because we mistake ourselves to be bound. The mistake is the sense of duality, which makes us consider the people and objects of the world as different from oneself. What differentiates one is the ego, which is the sense of being limited to one individuality. Ego is another name for selfishness.

Such wrong knowledge is a state of spiritual impurity and is called mala. It is also referred to as darkness, covering, curtain, obstruction and bondage.

It is Maya that gives rise to all the three malas. It creates the ego sense. Water in the ocean takes on a certain name and form and is referred to as a wave. The moment the wave subsides, it becomes what it always is— pure water.

Shiva has created individuality for the joyful pursuit of life. Egoism is the handiwork of humanity. Individuality becomes a cause for evil only when we add egoism to it.

Ego functions in two ways. One, when we take credit for the powers that are not ours, as all powers belong to God or Nature. Secondly, when we impose ourselves on others or insist that our will be done.

The second major cause for impurity is karma mala. Karma is voluntary action that arises out of a sense of want or lack in us. It arises when the doer is in a state of ignorance or imperfection, has the sense of duality and performs actions in the form of virtue and



vice, which leads to rebirth and reaping the fruit of actions. Karma takes us away from the inner self. The mind is not at rest, but is exerting itself and is therefore in a state of tension.

On the other hand, the perfect being indulges in kriya, which is spontaneous activity arising out of fullness as the free and natural overflow of bliss. Kriya is relaxed activity or actionless activity, where one is a doer and yet not a doer. Here one remains seated in the Self, and the action is automatically done. One is sitting silent, doing nothing, with one's will surrendered to the divine.

Ordinary action binds. While the bad action may create iron fetters, the good action also creates fetters, although these might be golden fetters. Kriya does not bind. It is spiritual activity which frees us from the prison of birth and death.

Moksha

In its negative sense, moksha means freedom from all limitations. It is absolute freedom.

In the positive sense, moksha means gaining one's own nature. When a lion is released from captivity, he still remains a lion, but he can now reveal his full powers as a lion. In that sense, moksha is only a getting of the gotten.

The concept of moksha varies in the different schools of Indian philosophy.

In the Vaisesika, the nature of the soul is *sat* or existence. Thus in the state of moksha, one becomes like a stone, devoid even of knowledge, just existing.

In Samkhya, the nature of the soul is both existence and consciousness. In moksha or kaivalya, the soul exists and remains a seer or doer.

Vedanta declares the nature of the soul to be existence, illumination and bliss. In moksha, it has all the three but remains inactive.

Kashmir Shaivism accepts satchitananda, but also activity or vimarsa, kriya, spanda, shakti or svatantriya. Thus the liberated person is vibrant with joyful activity.



Thus moksha is not a physical acquisition, but a realization, a remembrance or a reapprehension of the self. It is not a new acquisition. It is only a question of discovering what is already there.

Special features of moksha

Moksha is not a rejection of the world; it is a free acceptance. It is not opposed to enjoyment. What the self-realized person enjoys is the bliss of the Self, not the joy of the object.

It is not the world or its enjoyable objects that create bondage. It is attachment that creates bondage. The realized person enjoys the world unattached.

In Advaita, socio-cultural activity is not only meaningless, but it is a positive hindrance in attaining moksha. Liberation is only compatible with renunciation. The jivanmukta is also supposed not to create fresh karma, but to somehow work out his accumulated karma.

In Shaivism, this is not the case. Activity is a means to self-realization; after attainment, activity flows in a natural, spontaneous way. Activity arises not out of ignorance but out of the freedom to act. The realized soul feels one with all and does good to all. He spontaneously works for the cultural progress and betterment of society. For him it is not the physical presence of others that is the hindrance, but the act of seeing them as others. For one who has woken from the dream of duality, the world does not cease to exist, but is seen as the free expansion of his own self.

The Self is of the nature of aesthetic joy. All the arts are said to have come from Shiva.

Thus the celestial and the terrestrial, the spiritual and the secular, the transcendent and the immanent go hand in hand. In a sense they are one.

The highest realization is not nirvikalpa Samadhi. In that state all vikalpas are silenced and hence all activity ceases. But the natural and free vikalpas which are desireless and egoless flow automatically and one attains to sahaj Samadhi which is the highest state of realization.



Moksha and Divine grace

The Vedic traditions, including the Vaishnava and Shaiva, believe in the power of grace (anugraha, kripa or shaktipata) combined with self-effort. It is obvious that the powers with which the ego is endowed are the powers endowed by God.

In Kashmir Shaivism, Shiva is the source of all power. Shiva showers the individual soul with power through grace or anugraha.This manifestation of Shiva power is free. But it is not arbitrary. He showers it on deserving people only. Shaktipata is entirely motiveless. God does it purely for the benefit of the soul. It is a completely free act, an act of grace.

There is thus no contradiction in the two statements "everything is obtained by grace" and "everything is obtained through self-effort."

Moksha is release from grief, absence of grief (Duhkha Vimukthi; Duhkha Nivritti), and attainment of Ananda (Ananda Praapti). Paramatma, the Supreme Self, the Sovereign Lord, is the Embodiment of Indivisible Sweetness (Rasa), the Treasure house of Bliss (Ananda Nilaya). Hence, those who seek and secure His grace gain Eternity Itself.

-- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



CHAPTER 8

Stages of Spiritual Evolution

Evolution is gradual

In Advaita Vedanta, it seems that the transition to spiritual awakening happens in a single jump. In the analogy of the rope, you either see the snake in ignorance or you see the rope in knowledge. In the analogy of the dream, either you are dreaming or you are awakened. The transition is not seen as a gradual process.

In Kashmir Shaivism, self-realization is not attained in one flash. Although there is no difference in the nature of consciousness, yet the amount and degree of expression of consciousness varies from person to person.

When a brilliant light passes through a curtain, it becomes dim. Similarly, the light of consciousness is dimmed if there are impurities. The more the impurities are removed, the brighter the light becomes.

Seven grades of souls

The Tantric tradition accepts a hierarchical gradation of souls. Seven grades of souls are noted. These are called the seven knowers or subjects (*pramatas*).

The first three, pralayakal, sakala and vijnanakala belong to the impure stage of bondage.

The remaining four stages are mantra, mantreswara, mantra-maheswara and Shiva-pramata. These belong to the pure state.

Pralayakala

This is the initial stage when the soul is in the stage of pralaya or dissolution. This is the primordial stage of individual consciousness, the state of sleeping consciousness. The impurities exist but in a potential state. This is the initial stage from which the development of the soul starts.



Sakala

The second stage is that of sakala. This is the state of the soul awakened from dissolution. In this state, the soul is fully conscious, although tainted with all three impurities or malas. All the impurities here become manifest and are at work. This is the stage in which most of the people in the world are.

In this state, the samskaras that were dormant during dissolution are aroused. It is necessary that these samskaras be actualized in order that they may be eliminated finally. The soul has to work out its karma and exhaust its potentialities.

Vijnanakala

In the third stage of vijnanakala, the soul is free of karma mala and mayiya mala, but is still having anava mala which is responsible for limited individuality. The soul is still bound, but it is at the threshold of liberation. It has the knowledge but it does not yet have the divine dynamism. Saints, devotees and good-hearted people fall in this category.

The three initial stages can also be compared to the stages of tamoguna, rajoguna and sattvaguna.The quality of tamas is like a heavy, black curtain that fully obstructs the light. Rajas is like a red curtain that allows some light to pass through. Sattva is like a white curtain which does not impede the light but allows it to pass through.

The next four stages are mantra, mantresvar, mantra-mahesvar and Shiva. These belong to the realm of pure categories. These stages are attained after the three impurities have been removed.

Mantra

This is the fourth state. The mantra for this state is *aham aham idam idam*. Sometimes he experiences that he is the reality, the truth of this whole universe. He also experiences that this universe is false, unreal. This is an unstable state.

Mantresvar

The fifth state is called mantresvara. It is a more stable state. The mantra for this state is *idam aham*.The aspirant feels that this



universe is not false. It is the expansion of his own nature. Now he unites the state of the universe with the state of his own consciousness. This is actually the unification of jiva with Shiva.

Mantra Mahesvara

The sixth stage is that of Mantra-mahesvara.He finds himself one with the universal transcendent being. This is a stable state. The mantra is *aham idam* or “I am this universe”.

Shiva

The seventh and last state is that of Shiva. The observer of the state is also Shiva. There is nothing outside Shiva. The mantra for this state is *aham*, universal I. Thisness is gone, melted in his Isness.

The aspirant must be capable of both ascending and descending. The one who rises and cannot descend is incomplete. Shiva can descend and rise again. The individuality is that where Shiva can descend but cannot rise again.

> Man can realize his mission on the earth only when he knows himself as Divine and when he reveres all others as Divine.
>
> \- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*



CHAPTER 8

Kashmir Shaivism and the Basic Human Values

In this Chapter, we shall attempt to see whether the five basic human values of Truth, Righteous Conduct, Love, Non-violence and Peace as explained by Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as the core content of all world faiths have a place in the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.

Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's views

Sai Baba has explained at great length that there may be superficial or ritualistic differences among the different faiths, yet there is a common content of spirituality in all of them. This consists of the five basic, fundamental, universal and eternal human values of Truth (Sathya), Righteous Conduct (Dharma), Love (Prema), Non-violence (Ahimsa) and Peace (Shanti).

Briefly speaking, ***Truth*** or Sathya refers to the integral vision that sees the One behind the many. The main attempt in spirituality is to seek out that single Principle which explains the entire universe in all its immensity and diversity. This Principle may be referred to by any name, God, Brahman, Allah, Ishwar, Ahura Mazda or whatever; it is the Unity from which all this that we see has arisen. It is nameless, yet all names belong to It.

Righteous Conduct or Dharma refers to those laws that govern this whole universe. These are the Law of Causation, the Law of Action and Reaction and the Law of Compensation. Life is a game with its rules and God is like the referee who ensures that the play goes according to the rules. He ensures that the Law of Karma is implemented with strictness, sincerity and transparency. Everyone has to bear the consequences of his karma. If necessary, he has to take a succession of births in order to work out his karma.

Love is the primary force that keeps the world together. It basically amounts to selflessness. Selfish love is the most inferior.



Selfless human love like that of a mother for her children is superior. The highest is divine love which God exhibits towards the whole of creation. It is the purest form of love. Love expressed in words is Truth. Love expressed in feeling is peace. Love expressed in action is Righteous Conduct. Love in understanding is non-violence.

Non-violence has to be at the subtle level. We should not bear the slightest feeling of animosity, jealousy or hatred towards anyone else. We should respect the feelings of others. We should behave towards others in the same way in which we wish others to behave with us. We should respect the sanctity of all life and not cause pain to any sentient creature. Animals have not been placed in nature for being killed and eaten by human beings.

Peace is the feeling of harmony with reference to everyone else. We should be at peace with ourselves. To achieve this, it is necessary to have ceiling on desires and control over our senses. All negative emotions like greed, pride, ego, jealousy, lust etc should be kept under control. We should meditate and try to bring our minds to a desireless state

Sai Baba says that if we develop these basic human values in our personality, we shall become persons of character. He does not wish to convert anyone to a new cult or religion. He wants a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian and so on.

Human Values in Kashmir Shaivism

It is quite obvious that Kashmir Shaivism also incorporates these five fundamental human values.

Truth

The search for Truth takes us to Param Shiva, who is the Ultimate Reality. Kashmir Shaivism believes in Pure Monism, even beyond what is advocated in Advaita Vedanta. Shiva and Shakti are one. They are like the gem and its luster, or milk and its whiteness. Param Shiva is Cosmic Consciousness and Shakti is Cosmic Energy. It is Consciousness itself that has energy.

In fact, Kashmir Shaivism goes to the extreme when it says



that there is no universe at all. The universe is like the reflection in a cup shaped mirror. There cannot be a higher concept of unity than this.

Lalleswari put it thus:

A thousand times my Guru I asked:
How shall the Nameless be defined?'
I asked and asked but in vain.
The Nameless Unknown it seems to me,
Is the source of something that we see.

And again, she explains that God is everywhere and this is a great leap of understanding of the human mind.

The soles of my feet were off on the roads
While I wandered in search of Him.
Then lo! Of a sudden I saw
That He was all and everywhere,
I had nowhere to go in search of Him.
This was the Truth of a hundred truths.
Whoever learnt of it, will they not wonder?
Will they not be mad for joy?

She realizes that Creation and Dissolution are never-ending processes. They have happened in the past and shall happen again and again.

In time past, we were;
In time future, we shall be;
Throughout the ages, we have been.
For ever the sun rises and sets;
For ever, Shiva creates, dissolves,
And creates again.

And about the nature of the Cosmic Reality, she is absolutely clear. She says:

He who is the eternal 'Anahata'
The ever-unobstructed sound of Om;
Whose is the all-permeating form of the ethereal sky;
Whose dwelling is the vast transcendent void;



Who has no name, caste, gotra, nor form;
Who is Pure, Undifferentiated Self-awareness;
Who is Nada-Bindu, the Logos and the Light.

Dharma

Dharma or Righteous Conduct is a basic value in the Indian theory of purushartha.There are two basic, ultimate and absolute values in Sanatana Dharma. One is morality (dharma), which may also be called goodness, virtue and so on; the other is happiness, pleasure or satisfaction of desires (kama and artha). Kashmir Shaivism also believes in Dharma.

It is well known that Dharma is the path of shreyas, which seems difficult at first, yet yields sweet fruit, while the path of preyas, though attractive at first turns into a bitter poison at the end.

In order to reach Shiva, one has to live a life of truthfulness. Truthfulness means truth in speaking and also truthfulness of behaviour, which further means an honest and straightforward life free from hypocrisy.

Lalleswari sings thus:

What is bitter at first is sweet at the end,
What is sweet at first is poison in the end.

The first advice is to give up body consciousness, as far as possible.

This counsel to the body give, O Soul:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;
Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Then we have to conquer our major enemies.
Who slays the highway robbers three,
Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet in utter humility serves
His fellowmen—
He truly seeks out the Lord.

Righteous action does not lie in following religious rituals. What is needed is contemplation on the Lord. Say Lalla:



O fool, right action does not lie
In observing fasts and ceremonial rites.
O fool, right action does not lie
In providing for bodily comfort and ease.
In contemplation of the Self alone
Is right action and right counsel for you.

Love

The most significant characteristic of the state of Shivahood is love. God is perfect love for all creatures, and He acts for their good in a completely selfless way. Shiva is a state of pure love. Of all the ways of self-realization, love is the most efficacious. It is also the most satisfying. Love and egolessness are logically connected.

According to Kashmir Shaivism, human beings are by nature divine. The whole of mankind forms a single family. Love for God means love for one's fellow beings. There is a concept of *sarva-shivata*, which signifies that the personality of every human individual is divine. Another concept of *sarva-samata* means that all men are born equal. The principle of *sarva -swatantriya* signifies that all men are born free.

Human attention is Love. Human attention is the greatest good. If a child is deprived of all human contact for an extended period, it would probably die.

In human attention, there is love, luminous intelligence and energy. It has more vitamins than vitamins, more protein than protein and more restorative power than the latest possible remedy. Universal love or awareness of one's unity with others is the core of spirituality. It is a state of egoless consciousness that is also a state of natural goodness

Lalleswari was a great votary of love. All her life she journeyed on the path of love. She says:

In the mortar of love I ground my heart,
I parched and burnt and ate it out.
Thus all my evil passions removed,
I sat serene and unperturbed.



She searched for her Beloved high and low. But finally she did not find Him anywhere in the outside world.

For love that would not let me be
I, Lalla, set out in search of Him.
And toiled and toiled for days and nights.
Then lo! the most auspicious moment of life—
I saw the Pandit in my own home.

Then started the most beautiful phase of her life.

Thou wert absorbed in Thine Own Self,
Hidden from me;
I passed whole days in seeking Thee out.
But when I saw Thee in mine own Self,
O joy! Then thou and I
Disported ourselves in ecstasy.

Non-violence

Swami Lakshman Joo was a great votary of non-violence. He advised his disciples to be humble and soft-spoken. Subtle non-violence should be maintained through a strict discipline of body, mind and soul. Such is the vibrating power of a non-violent being, that in his presence even mutual enemies do not harbour enmity towards each other.

He was virulently against the killing of a living being for the pleasure of eating its flesh. All the acts of killing, preparing and eating meat are equally sinful and wrong. Even the witness of the act of killing commits sin.

Lalleswari echoed similar sentiments when she severely criticized the killing of animals as a sacrifice.

It covers your shame,
Saves you from cold,
Its food and drink
Mere water and grass.
Who counselled you, O Brahmin,
To slaughter a living sheep
As a sacrifice
Unto a lifeless stone?



Lalleswari also advises us to realize the Truth through politeness, patience and sweet behavior towards all. She says:

Though you are wise, be as a fool;
Though you can see, be as one blind;
Though you can hear, be as one deaf;
Patiently bear with all you meet,
And politely talk to everyone.
This practice will surely lead you
To the realization of the Truth

Peace

Kashmir Shaivism directs man to work for peace and tranquility in his own heart, which will automatically lead to the peace and tranquility in the world. We should strive for enlightenment and work constantly for the universal good. This will build a conflict-free world full of peace and happiness.

Lalleswari gave some good advice on how to achieve peace, both internal and external. The first quality we should develop in ourselves is indifference. Lalla Says:

They may abuse me or jeer at me,
They may say what pleases them,
They may with flowers worship me.
What profits them whatever they do?
I am indifferent to praise and blame.

Similarly, one should not bother about the events in one's life.

Ill or well, whatever befalls,
My ears will not hear,
My eyes will not see.
When the Voice calls from within
The inmost mind,
The lamp of faith burns steady and bright
Even in the wind.

The main thing is to control the mind. The Guru gives us the right advice on how to do this. All one has to do is to go inside and regulate the flow of thoughts.





Lalleshwari

My guru gave me but one precept:
From without withdraw your gaze within
And fix it on the inmost Self.
Taking to heart this one precept
Naked I began to roam.

She also says that there should be absolute faith in the Guru's instructions.

He who has faith in Guru's word,
And with true knowledge for the rein
Guides aright the steed of mind,
And holds his senses in control,
'Tis he enjoys the peace of mind.
He will not die nor be slain.

The process involves meditative practices, which become subtler and subtler till one moves into a thoughtless mind.

Let go the sacred tantra rites,
Only the mantra sound remains.
And when the mantra sound departs,
Only the chitta is left behind.
Then lo! the chitta itself is gone
And there is nothing left behind;
The void merges in the Void.



And finally things come to such a pass that the devotee and God are one.Lalla sings:

Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord,
Whatever word I uttered became a mantra;
Whatever this body of mine experienced became
The sadhana of Shaiva-tantra
Illumining my path to Param Shiva

Lalleswari is not alone in these perceptions. The Sufi saint Nund Reshi aired the same viewpoint.

He's beside me and
I'm beside Him
Blissful I feel with them
In vain, I went a-seeking Him.

Conclusion

The above discussion clearly shows that the five basic values enunciated by Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba are also advocated and practised in Kashmir Shaivism.

Bear all and do nothing;
Hear all and say nothing;
Give all and take nothing;
Serve all and be nothing.
- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



CHAPTER 9

Kashmir Shaivism and Advaita Vedanta

Although the main principle of both Kashmir Shaivism and Advaita Vedanta is pure monism, yet there are important differences in their thinking. Swami Lakshman Joo has pointed out five differences.

Meaning of karma Yoga

Vedanta teaches Karma Yoga in the sense that we must engage in disinterested action, without bothering about the result thereof.

Kashmir Shaivism believes that Karma Yoga means doing all actions while maintaining a breakless contemplation of God.

It is advisable to begin in silence without talking to anybody. This yoga in action makes the contemplation more solid, more firm, and more substantial.

After one has completed one's activity, if one sits in meditation, one will enter automatically into a contemplative mood.

The third stage is when one can maintain the contemplation even when talking, laughing and doing all other worldly actions. We have to be active while remaining established in our own nature.

The Shaivite approach is not to forsake the world in search of the spirit but to bring the world into the spirit, to discover in fact that the world *is* spirit.

In Vedanta, all personalities are placed into the same grinding machine, to be transformed into a super conscious, impersonal sage.Shaivism, with its compassionate view of human personality, is closer to the modern spirit. This is not simply 'something for everyone', but a respect for human differences, even a relishing of them as a manifestation of the variety-within-unity that adds savour to life.



Relation of intellect with soul

Vedanta explains that individual being is manifested only when the Brahman is reflected in the individual intellect. The individual being is thus a reflection of the universal being.

Kashmir Shaivism holds that individual intellect cannot hold universal being. It is Shiva who uses his energy of independent functioning to be reflected in the mirror of his independence.

Real vs. unreal universe

Vedanta holds that only Brahman is real; the universe is unreal or mithya. It does not really exist. It is only the creation of maya or illusion.It is like the illusion of a serpent in a rope in a dark place. Vedanta is world-denying in its tone. It tells us to renounce, give up and reject. Its approach is 'not this, not this'.

Kashmir Shaivism argues that it is Shiva Himself who has become all this. The universe is a reflection of Shiva. When Shiva is real, how can His reflection be unreal? The universe is true, real and solid. Shaivism is life-positive. Its strength is its power of love and acceptance. It divinizes life and affirms the world as the arena of God.

The Vedantic picture of the Absolute had only knowledge but not activity. Thus Brahman shone like a light but did not have the capacity to act. The Shaivite Absolute had both knowledge and action.

The Shaivite masters held that the classical yogas, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and raja yoga were incomplete. Shaivism was the combination of all the yogas. It included will, knowledge and action in a comprehensive whole.

Kundalini Yoga

Vedanta does not recognize kundalini yoga. It is supposed to be meant for those treading the inferior path of yoga.

For Kashmir Shaivism, Kundalini Yoga is the most important yoga.



Fitness to practice

Vedanta is very strict about imparting spiritual knowledge only to deserving people such as Brahmins with good qualities. Shankaracharya holds that Vedanta is meant only for sannyasins and not for others. Women and other castes are excluded.

Kashmir Shaivism imposes no such conditions. The doctrine of monism can be taught to everyone irrespective of caste, creed or colour. In fact, this thought can be more fruitfully practiced by women than by men. It is therefore, a universal system. The only variable is the earnestness of the seeker.

The highest truth

When a master attains the highest state, even the distinction between apparently opposed philosophies, like Vedanta and Shaivism, disappears. Swami Muktananda occasionally said that Vedanta and Shaivism are essentially the same. Abhinavagupta says that there is only one tradition and all is based on it. This is the Indian tradition of sanatana dharma or universal spirituality.

There is no strength more effective than Purity,
no Bliss more satisfying than Love,
no joy more restoring than Bhakti,
no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



CHAPTER 10

Relevance of Kashmir Shaivism to the Modern World

Essence of Kashmir Shaivism

Kashmir has had a preponderant influence on Indian and world thought. Here we will try to explain what the essence of Kashmir Shaivism is and what its relevance is to the modern world.

Kashmir Shaivism is a key to the mystery of existence. It acquaints us with the knowledge of the supreme secret of life. Once this knowledge is revealed, it becomes the touchstone of all our thoughts and actions and helps us to live a happy, balanced, purposive and serviceable life.

The fundamental point that distinguishes Kashmir Shaivism from all other Hindu doctrines is that this universe is a manifestation of Pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness is real and manifests the universe as a kind of reflection of itself. Thus the universe is as real as Pure Consciousness itself.

This theory is to be contrasted with the various Vedantic doctrines that hold the field as mainstream Hinduism. The best known is the Advaita Vedanta enunciated by Adiguru Shankaracharya. Shankara claimed that Brahman was the only reality and the universe was mithya. It was a creation of Maya, the power of the Brahman to delude us into a mistaken belief that the universe was real. Thus in the darkness, one was apt to believe that a piece of rope lying on the path was a serpent. Once we brought a candle, the truth was revealed that it was indeed a rope.

Shankara is known to have conquered the whole of India with his theory of Maya. When he reached Kashmir, he was worsted in an interaction with the local ladies. They deliberately flouted the rules of hospitality and starved Shankara for a few days. When he was attempting to cross a stream, he felt unable to proceed and



fell down in a fit of physical weakness. When the ladies taunted him about the weakness, he had to concede that there was no energy in his legs. "But you say that Shakti or energy is Maya and Consciousness alone is real. What is this energy that you seem to be lacking?"

Although Shankara conceded defeat and composed Saundariya Lahiri as an ode to the Goddess, he did not change his fundamental doctrine of the world being an illusion. Thus millions of Hindus continued to be soaked in the philosophy of Maya in their daily lives.

The second major contribution of Kashmir Shaivism is its belief that moksha is not to be found by renunciation of the world. Moksha is a revolution in our worldview and mindset, rather than the giving up of the world. Moksha is the development of true understanding of who you are. So Moksha is not a process. It is just a change of perspective.

Corollaries of these insights

These two basic insights have momentous corollaries. If the world is real, we have to live in it, not out of it. If you say that the world is Maya or an illusion, then we cannot live in it. Living in the world would mean living a life of illusion. So the logical thing to do is to opt out of a householder's life and become a sanyasi.

This is what the Buddha had done earlier. He had concluded that the world was a vale of sorrow and the best thing was to become a bhikshu. Shankara, in his anxiety to reinvigorate Hinduism, adopted Buddha's thesis and installed the sanyasi as the best person in society.

This contradicted the logic of the Upanishads, which were all taught by householder saints, not sanyasis. The result of these philosophies was a greatly weakened India, where the finest flower of youth started treating life to be just an illusion and opted out of it. If beggars and mendicants lead a society, you cannot build a strong nation.

The history of medieval India stands witness to the havoc caused by our not taking the route suggested by the Upanishads



and Kashmir Shaivism. We succumbed to the onslaughts of any and every invader, without offering the kind of resistance we did to Alexander.

The Indian Renaissance

The Indian renaissance came when Sri Ramakrishna, who was deeply influenced by Kashmir Shaivism, gave a totally new interpretation of Shankara's aphorism. When devotees asked him about the reality of the universe, he unequivocally declared that the universe was real. God himself has become all this. When God is real, how can His creation be unreal? What Shankara meant by mithya was not that it was unreal, in the sense of its being imaginary. He meant that it was temporary, ephemeral and changeable.

Ramakrishna's interpretation was spread far and wide by Swami Vivekananda. He went to the extent of saying that Indian youth should take to playing of football, to build their physical power, before they started dabbling in spiritual pursuits.

Sri Aurobindo's entire edifice of integral yoga is built on the central thesis of Kashmir Shaivism that creation is the involution of the divine into matter and now there is the ascent of the divine from matter to Pure Consciousness.

It was an amalgam of all these influences that converted Gandhi's non-violence into a weapon of the strong, instead of the apology for weak sufferance that it had historically become. Most historians now concede that India got freedom due to other factors also, like the Second World War, the activities of the revolutionaries, the INA and the mutiny by the naval ratings. In all this, the hidden hand of Kashmir Shaivism, which gave a positive activist slant to Hinduism, cannot be ignored.

Relevance to the modern world

When we look at the modern world, we find that there is disharmony and dissonance among individuals and nations. Traditional religions have become rigid, exclusionist and fundamentalist in approach. Everyone thinks that his religion is the best and that it is his bounden duty to convert everyone else to their point of view.



In this atmosphere of conflict, Kashmir Shaivism comes as a whiff of fresh air. It does not make an exclusive claim to truth nor does it wish to convert anyone. It believes that knowledge itself is a kind of bondage. What it values above everything else is spiritual experience leading to a new perspective on life. Once you attain to that new perspective, you realize that God himself has become all this. Only God exists. We are all temporary forms of God. Therefore, the question of one person hating another does not and cannot arise.

To the modern youth obsessed with physical pleasures and a sense of the utter purposelessness of a single span of life, Kashmir Shaivism has to offer an alternative scenario that imbues life with a definite purpose. It grants an individual an infinite succession of lives. Each life is like a step in a long journey. The purpose of man is to rise from the purely physical to the stage where the vital centers are also developed, then to the emotional level where aesthetics get full play, to the intellectual level of science and philosophy and finally to the spiritual level where the divine elements in man find full expression. The journey of each individual soul is from humanity to divinity, with all kinds of experiences provided along the journey to make it pleasant and blissful.

Congruence with modern science

The beauty of this philosophy is that modern science is finding full support for its fundamental propositions. Ian Stevenson has established the veracity of reincarnation memories, Raymond Moody's study of those having a Near Death Experience gives full credence to the survival of soul after death, and Brian Weiss has subjected hundreds of subjects to past life regression therapy with astonishing results. David Bohm has established the thesis that you cannot explain the Implicate Order without reference to consciousness. Modern quantum physics is unable to explain the phenomenon of non-locality without postulating a communication travelling instantaneously from one separated electron to another.

Conclusion

Kashmir Shaivism has thus a major role to play in the promotion of a global society based on science, modern values,



equity, amity, brotherhood and peace. It is the duty of every Indian to get acquainted with its basic beliefs, so that he can be a good exponent of the same, wherever he may happen to settle down. The dispersal of our Diaspora across continents is a major event in the history of humanity. We should be aware of our divine mission and be fully equipped for it.

> ***A Society without values will cease to be human. The more human values are cherished, the better will be the growth of society, the nation and the world. We cannot rest content with an educational system which is confined to academic achievement. It has to promote human virtues simultaneously .***
>
> ***Sri Sathya Sai Baba***



Glossary

Abhasa – realisation, enlightenment

Abheda – Unity

Aham – the Id or Ego

Ahamkara – Pride

Aishvarya / aisvarya – Another name of Shakti, prosperity

Akaash – Sky, Universe, Ether

Anassnda – Bliss

Ananva - Ego

Anu – atom, miniscule

Anuttara - Indescribable

Apara – Inferior

Atman - The Self

Beeja – Seed / origin of growth

Bheda – Diversity

Bhedabheda – Unity in diversity

Buddhi – Intellect

Bhoga - Enjoyment

Bimba – reflection

Brahma- Supreme

Chaitanya - Self-consciousness

Chit - Consciousness

Dhwani – Sound

Dhyana – Meditation

Drishti/ Dristi – Vision

Dukha – Unhappiness, sadness, pain

Gandha – Smell

Guru-Shishya Parampara - Tradition of teacher and disciples

Homa - Oblation in fire

Hridayakasa – Heart Space



Ichha – Will

Indriyas – Senses

Japa - Repetition of holy name

Jiva – Being

Jnana – Knowledge

Kala – Creation, art

Kala or Kaala – Time

Kanchukas – Sheath

Krama - Succession

Kriya - Action

Kula - Branch of philosophy based on man-woman union

Leela – Play

Maha Pralaya – The Ultimate destruction, End of the World

Mahabhutas – Elements – five elements comprise Air, Water, Fire, Earth and Ether - Sky

Maithuna - Sexual union

Manas – Mind

Maya – Illusion

Moha – Attachment, binding us to earthly things, delusion

Moksha – Liberation

Nara – Man

Nivritti - Renunciation

Nityatva - Always.

Niyati – Destiny / Divine intervention

Nyaya – Justice, law

Panch – Five

Para – Supreme

Para –apara – Intermediate

Param samvid - Supreme Experience

Parama Purusha – Supreme Being, Shiva

Param Siva - Highest Bliss



Parameshwara - Supreme Lord
Pratibhijnya - Recognition
Parampara - Tradition
Prakasha - Light
Prakriti - Nature
Prana – Life, life force
Pratibimba – reflection
Pravritti - *Pratibimbavada* – Theory of reflection
Prithvi – Earth
Purna – Complete
Purnatva - Fullness.
Purusha - Male
Rasa – Taste
Rudra – Another name for Shiva
Rupa – Colours, beauty, vision
Samarasya – perfect equilibrium
Samata – Equality
Sara – Essence
Sarva – All
Sarvajnatva - Omniscience.
Sarva-Kartritva - All making
Shabda – Sound
Shakti – Shiva's consort, the feminine Supreme, energy, power
Shakti Paat - Guru's grace
Sparsha – Touch / feel
Sukha – Prosperity, pleasure
Sukshma – Subtle
Svatantraya – Independent
Tattvas - Elements
Trika - Trinity of Nara, Shakti and Shiva
Upayas - Means



Vak - Speech
Varna – Colour
Vayu – Air
Vidya – Knowledge
Vishva – World , Universe
Vrata - Solemn vow
Vyapakatva - All reaching
Yaga – Sacrifice
Yoga - Spiritual discipline



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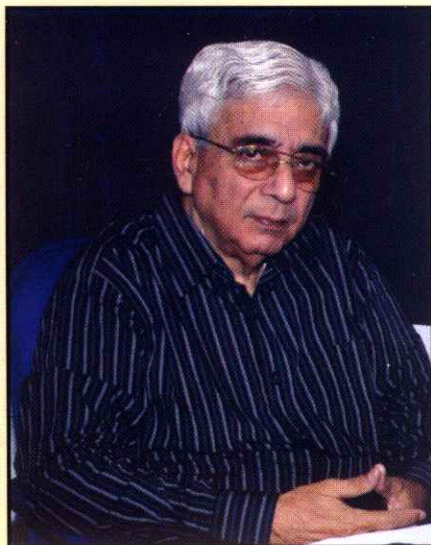
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